

Greenbelt Arts Advisory Board Report 16-1
Recommendation to the Greenbelt City Council
April 20, 2016

Subject: Evaluation of FY17 Recognition Group and Contribution Group Applications

Background

At their March 1, 2016 meeting, the Greenbelt Arts Advisory Board (AAB) reviewed applications for renewal of Recognition Group status from the Greenbelt Writers Group and the Greenbelt Pottery Group. All board members were present at this meeting, including: Tatiana Ausema (Chair), Anna Socrates (Vice Chair), John Drago, Oliver Gaycken, Mark Granfors-Hunt and Charlette Wilson. Also present were representatives of the applicant organizations as named below.

At their April 5, 2016 meeting, the Board reviewed an application from CHEARS for renewal of their Recognition Group status and applications for renewal of Contribution Group status and FY17 funding from the Greenbelt Concert Band, Friends of New Deal Café Arts and the Greenbelt Arts Center. Board members present included: Tatiana Ausema (Chair), Anna Socrates (Vice Chair), John Drago and Charlette Wilson. Also present were representatives of the applicant organizations as named below and Nicole DeWald (staff liaison). Members Mark Granfors-Hunt and Oliver Gaycken were absent but contributed written feedback on the applications under review.

Summary Recommendations

1. AAB members voted unanimously to recommend that Recognition Group status be renewed for the City's Fiscal Year 2017 for the Greenbelt Writers Group, Greenbelt Pottery Group and CHEARS.
2. AAB members voted to support – in full or in part -- the \$4,300 funding increase requested by the Greenbelt Arts Center* (5 in favor, one opposed)
3. AAB members voted to support – in full or in part -- the \$1,000 funding increase requested by Friends of New Deal Café Arts* (5 in favor, one opposed)

* This support is offered on the understanding that there is no fixed cap on contribution group funding. If increasing the appropriation for these groups would necessitate reductions in the awards to other organizations, the AAB would like to be apprised of that in advance and have the opportunity to make recommendations accordingly.

Details of the Board's evaluation of all applications are provided below.

Detailed Findings: Recognition Groups

Greenbelt Writers Group

Represented at the meeting by Barbara Ford, President

The Board unanimously endorsed the group's request for renewal of their Recognition Group status.

Comments: "An important aspect of our cultural environment"; members were pleased to hear about the plans for a new anthology and commended the group for successfully weathering a leadership transition.

Concerns: Members support the group's own goals of creating an online presence and expanding their outreach to new writers, including younger people.

Greenbelt Pottery Group

Represented at the meeting by member Lola Skolnik

The Board members unanimously endorsed the group's request for renewal of their Recognition Group status.

Comments: "dynamic and strong organization"; members commended the group's "Show Me Sundays" (free skill-share workshops) and Empty Bowls fundraisers supporting local emergency food assistance.

Concerns: None

Chesapeake Education, Arts and Research Society (CHEARS)

Represented at the meeting by member Maggie Cahalan

Board members unanimously endorsed the group's request for renewal of their Recognition Group status.

Comments: "excellent organization that offers a broad range of activities"; members praised the Green Man Festival and hands-on art activities "such as the group mosaics"; "good penetration into Franklin Park and with UMD students"; a member suggested contacting UMD's Sustainability Office if a connection is not already in place

Concerns: The group's focus on environmental education was seen as valuable but outside the purview of the Arts Advisory Board; responding to their representative's comments about being in a "regrouping" period and their return to all-volunteer operations, concern was expressed about the group possibly being "spread too thin with so many projects and sites"

Detailed Findings: Contribution Groups

Friends of New Deal Café Arts (FONDCA)

Represented at the meeting by Barbara Simon (President) and Talia Kowitt, Board member.

Overall Score: 4.0 (very good)

Service to the Community: 4.4 (very good)

Organizational Effectiveness: 3.2 (good)

Artistic Merit: 4.4 (very good)

Comments: Members were pleased to hear about the group's efforts to include more Latino audience members and programs as well as more programs for youth; "love the music festivals"; art show receptions lauded as opportunities to socialize and build a sense of community

Concerns: Members expressed support for the proposed Jazz Under the Stars concert but were not in favor of additional funding for programs which have yet to be defined; members expressed concern about the "closed nature of the board"; "the group's insularity seems at odds with its ethos of community engagement. A change in organizational structure that encourages more community involvement would be beneficial to the organization"; encouraged more advertising of events outside of Old Greenbelt

Greenbelt Arts Center (GAC)

Represented at the meeting by Don Cook (President) and Win Britt (Assistant Treasurer).

Overall Score: 4.5 (outstanding)

Service to the Community: 4.6 (outstanding)

Organizational Effectiveness: 4.2 (very good)

Artistic Merit: 4.6 (outstanding)

Comments: "the seasons always include a good mix of musicals, drama, classics and new plays"; "stable and committed board of directors; "they are a 501C3"; "they present a varied program and made efforts to cover issues of diversity with the Raisin/Clyborne cycle. Kudos!"; members felt that the requested funding increase "would enhance the effectiveness of the organization and the experience of attendees"

Concerns: members expressed interest in seeing further website development, more collaboration with the Old Greenbelt Theater and other local businesses and more research into audience interests

Greenbelt Concert Band (GCB)

Represented at the meeting by Eli Zimete (General Manager) and Paul Quillen (Treasurer).

Overall Score: 3.8 (very good)

Service to the Community: 4 (very good)

Organizational Effectiveness: 3.3 (good)

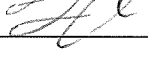
Artistic Merit: 4 (very good)

Comments: members praised the band's participation in city holiday celebrations and their outreach to audiences in assisted living facilities

Concerns: "the application describes the generational composition of the band and notes that it is an ongoing problem, but it proposes no strategies for improvement"; "more programming and members outside the city than in the city"; "the lack of 501C3 status or even an application for the status is a concern. The band needs to develop a plan for funding that does not rely solely on city support."

Authorization

This report is submitted on behalf of the Arts Advisory Board by:

____ Tatiana Ausema 
Tatiana Ausema, Chair

4/20/16 _____
Date